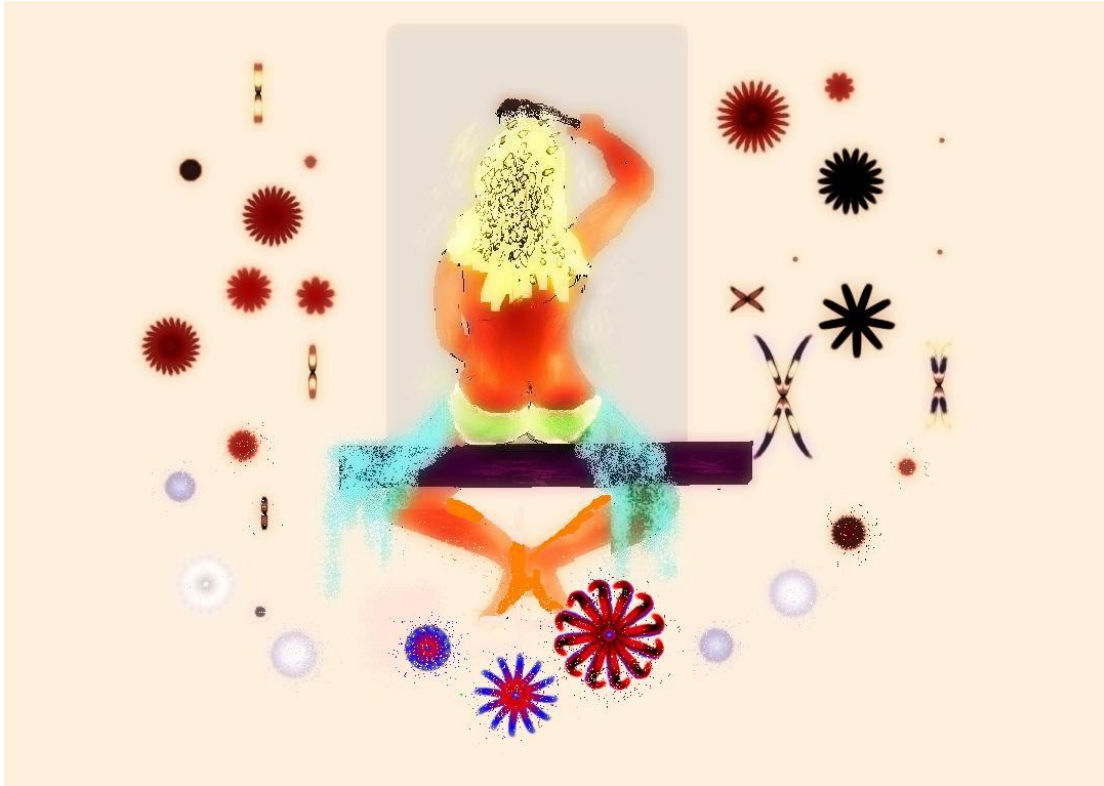


The Man

Nesta's Thoughts.

*Illustration 11 : Nesta*

The Man was absent for about two weeks from New Neptune 12 his own planet, and during that time he learned much while he stayed in the rented house in Augustus, present capital of New Earth 1 as he watched the streaked navy blue sky outside the city dome as space ships of every design arrived, bursting through black polluted clouds that threatened to drop radioactive waste.

The new proposed allies of Augustus Sutherland were arriving. Not so fearful of The Man since Po Wei had spread the empire's money around.

Not even The Man could afford to keep a battle fleet in space for a long time. The Man needed a quick decisive battle, not a prolonged war.

It was Tintagel luring his enemies into the open by spreading rumours the dictatorship was broke and Po Wei had swallowed it. Why The Man's fleets were assembled now under the façade of repairs in dry docks and men had been issued shore passes. The imperial spies took note and reported back to Po Wei, no ships of The Man were in space, he was broke and THE PIRATES NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD.

And the banks confirmed it, the agents of Tintagel the Wise had been trying to secure loans with banks sympathetic to the imperial ways so had been turned down.

Which had an effect upon Posidonius whose loan to The Man would not be paid back and was thinking of going to where the grass was greener.

REMEMBER THIS.

And Po Wei and his gleeful friends forgot that the armies of The Man would fight for nothing for they did not want to return to living under an imperial lifestyle.

THAT WAS A SLAVE ECONOMY

SERF LABOUR,

A FEAUDAL SYSTEM.....all rolled into one.

Po Wei had served Tintagel unwittingly, war was coming and The Man would get his battle.

Even now red, yellow striped tents were going up about the landing docks were the new allies of Augustus were docking.

Vendors selling everything they could and the most notable were the flesh markets where slaves were penned.

And jesters carried paper effigies of The Man with enlarged head and bits for the amusement of the crowd who could not wait till night fall to see the effigies burn.

They who had cause to fear The Man, the guilty who wore fashions from every age or lack of fashions for it was one giant cat walk to parade their wares and what they owned; slaves with collars on all fours like dogs.

Why the slaves and poor did not mock the effigies for they whispered to each other, “A poor day for us if The Man is defeated.”

And in the sky balloons that proclaimed The Man’s law

“I condemn the guilty,

I am The Man,

I give freedom to the poor,

Rich as well.

All are welcome within my lands,

My law is for all.

Human and alien,

Rich and poor,” The Man.

And the crowd was paying at stalls to take laser shots at the balloons for it made them feel safer.

And the rich read them and laughed and ate sandwiches as they lay on sofas in the grassy flowered park areas and forgot many of the slaves and poor could read and they showed sullen faces.

“Discontent,” Augustus was heard too rant and lived up to his name, The Crucifier, for examples must be had.

‘Some history calls,
 Alfred the Great,
 Alexander the Great,
 Oneghus mac Fergus the Pict Champion,
 James the Wisest Fool in Christendom,
 George Washington,
 I admire Winston Churchill,
 Abraham Lincoln he freed the slaves.
 Christ the Christ Consciousness.’

But of the Emperor Augustus Sutherland he ranks with Cumberland.

The hated one but they forgot the Chief of Outer Darkness who rules all the cities and villages there, what’s his name again?

“Augustus Blood Sucker,” the discontent wrote on walls.

“I could have ruled wisely and given my people peace but history remembers BLOOD more willingly so my name will live for ever,” Augustus often joked.

And the discontented numbered thousands and they left for New Saturn 12 and formed the Liberty Legion.

“I don’t care if they number half a million, I will not pardon them but crucify them,” Augustus ranted when he heard.

“Who needs them, soon my baby farms will provide the army will loyal troops who knows who feeds them their pleasures,” he was also heard to scream at space where he hoped The Man heard.

His new loyal troops who fed growth hormones were growing at an alarming rate, some already in uniform and “I have given them exemptions from taxes and they can chose any for labour or entertainment from the class 6 group of citizens,” Augustus boasted to Po Wei.

And they would become a burden to the class 6 poor who already paid heavy taxes.

“I am the Crucifier, I can do what I want,” Augustus and Po Wei feared a rebellion were he might be swept away in the rush to topple everything imperialist.

*

“I am glad I gave you your freedom Tintagel,” The Man.

“I am your slave,” a reply.

I Nesta overheard as I combed my growing blond curls, a sign of my growing self confidence. This was a parody, a mockery of what The Man proclaimed.

I stopped combing, all ears now?

“By your own choice Tintagel,” The Man.

I could not understand, Tintagel was rich and powerful and wanted to be a slave?

“Slave I am to a master who is stuck with me for if you free me I may wonder,” Tintagel mirthfully and to change the subject, “Prince Vespa our friend has told us much.”

“Yes the emperor walks beside him unawares he is our ally, look Tintagel at the parade,” for The Man was looking out the window towards the docking area.

Then he scented my fine smell because Tintagel had gifted me perfumes.

I was not a child but a woman and The Man was uncomfortable and I sensed it, so did Tintagel who was amused.

I was not one of The Man’s courtiers, human or alien for some were furred and his enemies said he coupled with animals.

“They are more intelligent, sensitive and technologically advanced than us humans so who calls them beast?” The Man in his defence. “We are all Jock Thomson’s burns,” he would also say and many aliens loved The Man for he did not call them beasts but PEOPLE.

And one was the Princess Veag which means Little of the Rhegid Empire which was unknown to the imperialists for the Rhegid Empire was in that part of uncharted space that bordered The Man’s dictatorship.

“And every time she visited with the Rhegid ambassadors they sought each other and frolicked like lambs for he needed the Rhegid battle wagons,” Tintagel the Wise his Chronicles.

“And her skin was of the finest red hue and shiny and oily and her hair was a flowing green and her eyes purple, but she was a woman and humanoid.

And she gave birth to a son who eventually became Emperor of the Rhegid Empire.

And his name was,

An T-each or in New English,

THE SLOW HORSE.

Yes you see The Man was almost as wise as me,” Chronicles of Tintagel.

Do not forget the name T-each the red skinned emperor.

So the enemies of The Man said, “His brain is above his knees,” and “He should eat bromide for breakfast, lunch and supper.”

*

As I Nesta looked out of the window of Split Wind Inn seeing The Crucifier in all his glittering imperial pomp, sitting on his gold floating throne as soldiers in polished body armour and military bands playing stirring music and the princes of space bowing low in homage from their own float thrones, while their trumpeters sounded each acknowledgement of submission to the emperor’s leadership.

In reality they acknowledged Po Wei the real power behind the thrown.

“Fall down and give thanks for your emperor,” but I cleared my throat and spat out the window for I was not one of Augustus’s soldiers or officials.

And behind me The Man could not help but inspect me not because I was a cow or a sheep but because I was a woman and attractive.

I was already a handsome girl before The Master Priest got hold of me.

Now being a woman it dawned upon me someone was ogling my bottom so I deliberately shifted it left to right and The Man became uncomfortable; what I Nesta intended, “Well he shouldn’t be staring should he?”

*

The words of Tintagel the Wise take over.

And inside her a clock awoke wanting to kill The Man and her, the virus bomb implanted in her by Aelfric for his threat to Nesta was real.

Now she rested her hands on the pearl handed holsters of the laser pistols given her by me Tintagel and shifted again.

The girl had grit and The Man coughed and looked away.

I Tintagel smiled and hoped my belief in Nesta would pay off and she would not assassinate The Man but those that sent had her.

“And both players saw each other as a shrew needing tamed and the virus would make sure the union of the shrews would be till death,” Chronicles Tintagel.

And Nesta looked into the eyes of mine, Tintagel and saw she was his pawn and was angry, that arose from her womanly side for she didn’t want to project herself as a sex bimbo but as Nesta, while another part of her gloated that she was as pretty as The Man’s courtesans.

His female monkeys in chain mail, his giant bats hanging sleeping from rafters, his aliens she chided and felt immediately horrid within herself for she knew The Man didn’t keep company with the bad but the good.

Two tears came into her eyes.

She felt she did not belong in the company of these good aliens because she had tried to assassinate The Man.

And knew she could seduce The Man and either kill him for he was a man because she hated all men, or become one of his women and gain power that way.

Four tears replaced the original two.

She didn't want that, she had had enough of being pawed by men for one thing.

She wanted love and respect in an uncaring universe. "Save us our gods of creation," how often she had heard that from the poor in front of their lit essence joysticks.

Now Aelfric had failed to account for the human soul because he was a robot, an electric current following about copper circuits.

"See Po Wei has swallowed the bait," The Man meaning the tale of bankruptcy.

"Yes master," I Tintagel answered watching Nesta.

'And Nesta was lost in thought, here was he who Condemned the Guilty who I have been sent to kill. So why do they want him dead, for they are the guilty, the abusers of my kind,' see The Man has not laid a finger on me **yet**, and she became a little annoyed at this, for she was a woman and she wanted The Man's attention.

Not Tintagel the Wise's gifts and soothing words.

For whenever there is injustice and oppression the people look towards the heavens for a deliverer.

ONE WHO CAN CONDEMN THE GUILTY

And she no longer wanted to kill The Man and the clock in side her hated her.

And in 50220 A.D. the heavens didn't have much chose so chose The Man, a person who knew how to wield a sword at the corrupt roots of the empire.

Now she looked hard at The Man and who smiled his charming smile back so his face became a crooked scar. Nesta wanted to kiss it better and saw The Man as being Christ, Gandhi, Wellington, Napoleon and others all rolled into one genius.

Surely I am in the presence of the one who CONDEMNS THE GUILTY.

From his height, seven feet he looked down at her. P

FLASHING. O

He had smiled again showing off his teeth. L

She saw he was satisfied at what he saw. I

She was not a piece of meat. C

Out came her pearl handled guns. E

But he was quick and had them pointing up at her chin.

"Go ahead and shoot," she questioned her eyes full of anger. S

Now The Man decided her eyes where full of the sparkle of a million I
emeralds and she could out stare the stars and definitely him so backed off. R

Grunting annoyance he had lost the first round of the shrew taming game. E

Oh, I wished my master would not play these silly games with my N
apprentice and go chase up one of his courtiers, but then I needed him to lure Nesta
into betraying those that had sent her. Now I Tintagel consoled himself with sucking
a Victory V, allowing its heat to clear my thoughts.

I thought of robot Wendy, no problems, no game, she was cyborg, made to please me; and this was my weakness because I did not understand the game between the human sexes.

“It is said that if a man and woman stare into each other’s eyes for a minute they will either make love or fight,” Chronicles of Tintagel.

Now Nesta backed off as well but tripped over my feet and fell on her bottom, it hurt and The Man and myself saw FEAR in her eyes for she was no longer in control of the situation.

Both wondered what evil Posidonius had done her.

And The Man handed her her guns back making sure the safety was on and turned his back on her.

BUT SHE WAS THE DOMINANT THOUGHT IN HIS MIND.

Just for an instant her foolishness allowed the teaching of Aelfric to surface and the thought of killing The Man was present.

The Man was the king beast of all men and must die so she could be released from FEAR.

AELFRIC EUROPE HAD DONE HIS WORK WELL.

The Man had handed back her guns to disarm her so he could then pounce.

NEON LIGHTS FAIL.

POWER FAILURE.

BLACKNESS.

Tintagel switches on a nuclear fusion camper light.

“We will kidnap Po Wei’s original son, destroy the clones and any robots we find and hold this Po Shen for ransom. Po Wei will be neutralised and allow their ships to sail into our traps,” The Man ruthlessly as he opened a chilled Pepsi Cola and then a fly landed on the top of the opened bottle.

Now Nesta was amazed he spoke so openly in front of her.

She looked at me Tintagel; why had he befriended her?

She could not betray his trust in her, the old Nesta was winning.

Watch out Posidonius *a rope is coming your way*.

And a clock inside Nesta wasn’t happy.

Nesta also realised The Man this trust with his war plans was a weight, a heavy weight upon her shoulders and she cursed him for it.

As for The Man he had his fingers crossed he wasn’t wrong about her.

I sucked another V sweet.

*

Now The Man was who he was and put on his disguise and went out and brought back women. One was a red alien in the latest fashion, a yellow transparent smock that showed red lingerie.

And her whole body was a mass of tattooed flowers and Nests saw amongst them two spiders, some green aphids and a lady bird.

THAT WAS SOME PIECE OF WORK.

“I am a mercenary seeking a new master,” Nesta heard The Man lie as he pushed more drink towards her so she tumbled into his bed.

And Nesta turned away angry and sickened.

And another time he brought back a reptilian woman whose skin was flesh coloured scales and smelled like fresh crocodile shoes.

And Nesta sought the toilet and was sick.

It was true The Man was a beast with an insatiable sexual appetite.

“You are revolting,” Nesta threw at him the next day unable to take any more punishment.

And he stood there grinning like a bad boy and Tintagel shook his head and took Nesta aside, “My dearest girl, he is the dictator and what he chooses to do is not your business but be assured he has not lain with those women, he is merely letting it still be known he is a mercenary seeking a master that is all and his cover is still safe. In the morning they awake and find a purse of dollars and think the night well spent, besides we will be going home very soon.”

And Tintagel showed her a pocket recorder still with rubber suckers attached and switched it on and she heard he had told the truth.

Now she went red and hid her anger that The Man had gotten to her, “Snake,” was all she said.

Tintagel left it at that.

*

Nesta’s first mission: to accompany The Man and Tintagel in a kidnapping.

Backdrop: Night, cloudy, five miles out a phosphorous cloud had been ignited by the pollution police and burns a bright yellow/orange.

A pale sickly bone coloured moon tries to compete with soot riddled clouds ready to drop their radioactive war remains.

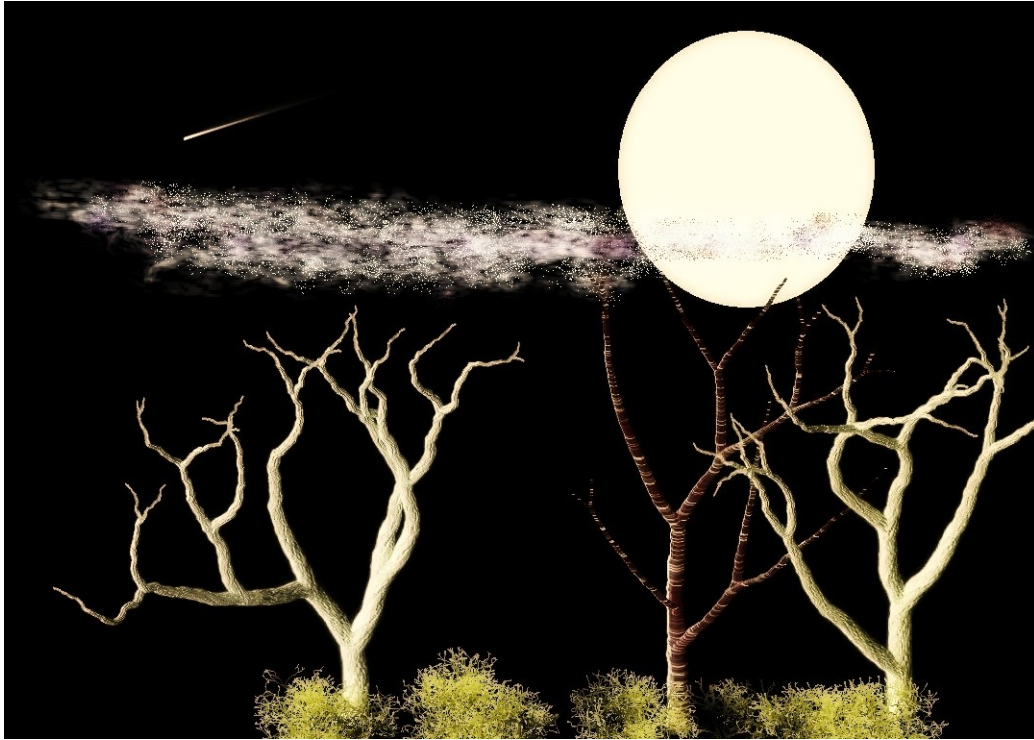


Illustration 12: radioactive clouds

And The Man dumped a dark brown sack none too gently onto the desert sand and sliced it open with his short sword and out crawled Po Shen the original son of Po Wei, First Minister to The Emperor Augustus in his green pyjama smock.

“Po Shen, make trouble and I will kill you and you will go to hell,” The Man and Po Shen looked up and saw The Man’s silver wings glittering in the pale moon light under the six moons of New Earth and knew he was in trouble.

AN OWL HOOTED.

A CICADA TWANGED AWAY.

A TWO HEADED BLACK MUTANT RAT POUNCED ON A GIANT ROACH.

A FROG CROAKED.

A WORM GOT EATEN BY A MOLE.....Po Shen faced The Man and sat still not even daring to place his hands on the gash at the back of his head were The Man had coshed him.

“I will have to go, I have played my part for LIBERTY for rich and poor alike,” Prince Vespa said emphasising rich for he was a heavenly ruler. Half alien and human so an outcast from imperial circles but always asked to provide space battle wagons in time of war.

Now Po Shen couldn't help sneering at Vespa's ugliness, his skin was crimson, hair long and free and pink, eyes yellow all atop a human body.

“I condemn the guilty,” The Man lurching too an inch from Po Shen's now frightened cosmetic lined face and Po Shen was sure he felt the filed teeth of The Man sink into his purple lipstick but it was FEAR he felt.

Now Nesta could not help the smile escaping. The entire universe knew about Po Shen's bedroom frolics. He had a taste for adolescents now a consensual sex age in the empire no longer existed. Nesta and her street friends hated Po Shen's types for they needed them for a warm bed and dinner. They were beasts like The Man and she became confused for The Man was the enemy of Po Shen and his friends.

“Little woman, two weeks isn't enough to get to know The Man,” a virus clock warned in her.

He is just like Posidonius and Aelfric and the factory workers so must die.

The Man is ABSOLUTE and takes liberty from you.

“I don’t know who you are that speaks to me such inside my head but The Man is different. Look at him; see the silver shine from his wings as if he is a demi god. He stands like the statue of LIBERTY proclaiming justice for the oppressed. Why a Red man such as Prince Vespa would not risk his life for The Man if the alien saw otherwise?

“Once again you help Vespa?” The Man.

“There will be a time when I will need your help against Augustus.”

“You will be welcome, you and your people in building the new order in the dictatorship.”

PAUSE: A night moth fluttered under Vespa’s nose onto Nesta who flinched. It then landed on a rock a few feet from Po Shen and a dark reptilian head stretched out and gobbled it up.

Po Shen screamed and lurched to his feet and toppled for The Man had tied his shoe laces together.

WOSH.....Nesta felt metal flying past her and The Man’s short sword landed vibrating away in the yellow head of a desert rattlesnake.

“Good aim,” Vespa admired.

“Here,” he said offering the snake to Vespa.

“Share it?”

“I don’t like snake remember Vespa?”

Nesta liked snake.

“I am not offended, take care guardian of space,” and Prince Vespa left and Nesta was impressed with The Man’s latest title as she forgot the virus clock.

“Guardian of Beasts like Vespa and mutants, they wait in the badlands for The Man to settle them in houses made for humans. Three legged woman are The Man’s favourites, six breasts,” the virus started but Nesta used her will power to silence its lies.

The virus knew now it had a battle and Aelfric had made a mistake to pick Nesta but as Aelfric never made mistakes no one ever told him that and lived any way.

He had this bath see!

And the virus was related to a single strand of protein that had sparked of evolutionary life a billion billion years ago so

WAS NOT TOTALLY HUMAN

THEREFORE IT COULD NOT UNDERSTAND A HUMAN FEMALE’S MIND.

It had lost already and didn’t know it.

Nesta knew The Man was ugly, he was scarred and bionic but the laws he made were good ones, not like what Aelfric said at all at all.

The Man was a swashbuckler who rid space of tyranny and his enemies were brutal so brutal means must be taken against them to survive, or she and her kind would have no hope.

And a virus was unhappy.

And Nesta knew she made The Man uncomfortable when he stared at her bottom
and she had wicked thoughts.

And a virus was suddenly ill.

See Nesta was basically good.

All life is,

Flesh is full of the divine spark.

It is automatically attracted towards the LIGHT.

She had been abused.

Therefore hated evil and Augustus and his friends.

Like the common crowd she yearned for a deliverer.

She thought she had found him.

He would be her personal friend too.

Deep down she wanted it that way.

A garden and flowers also.

A warm clean sea to swim in.

A man to trust.

Things she had been denied by life.

“And somewhere a black scorpion crawled into a red woman’s glove and made
itself a home in a poor man’s hovel in a shanty town. Would it push off before the
woman that lived there put on the glove?”

Nature is part of us, we bulldoze but it survives for it is tenacious,” Chronicles of
Tintagel.

Character Update

He was an alien prince from Maponosia, ruler of the whole planet and did have human imperial blood contaminating his body from the forceful insertion of genes into his grandmother on the orders of the Emperor George Apollo Sutherland, donated from a minor cousin. It didn't matter who, as long as it made the prince a blood relative since blood relatives tended to cling together for protection.

Maponosia was a year's travel from New Earth so managed to keep a form of semi independence from the empire.

(The days of disappearing down Worm Holes and appearing in another galaxy just like that were just beginning.)

“Our independence is put up with because our battle wagons are anchored inside the empire for the disposal of Augustus to send against those

HE DISLIKES.

And I am revolted with myself for I have helped Augustus earn his name

THE CRUCIFIER.

And I look across colourful space seeking help from one to deliver my conscience from guilt and until that day I remain Augustus's loyal cousin,

UNTIL

The Man emerged from the whirling gun smoke of New Saturn 12. Then I became his

FRIEND.”

Vespa, diary 50216 A.D.

“This prince has much to hate Augustus for, because after the Peace of August when The Man obtained New Saturn 12, Augustus accused Vespa’s parents of treason and sent a fleet on a surprise visit to Maponosia and crucified the whole royal family except Vespa. Vespa was spared because he was serving in his own fleet and Augustus was too far from his supply base for a long war.

“Why have you done this cousin?” Vespa asked.

“Because I heard you father was aiding The Man in the war just ended.”

And Prince Vespa swore vengeance against his emperor a common thief and murderer, no not common, royal murderer.

“And see Vespa, as a true cousin and friend I allow you to remain ruler of Maponosia and because of me you inherit early,” Augustus.

But not all men where like Aelfric, Posidonius or Po Wei, some had honour and valour and one was Vespa.

“I have read your works and heard your voice and believe in you,” Vespa relayed secretly to The Man.

“Then let us be brothers for I have none,” The Man’s coded reply back.”

Chronicles of Tintagel page 2089.